

C63D.5
C273

A large, two-story house with a snow-covered roof and porch, heavily decorated with warm white string lights. The house features multiple gables and dormers, all outlined with lights. A wooden ramp with a railing, also decorated with lights, leads up to the porch. The scene is set in a snowy landscape with bare trees in the background under a twilight sky.

Celebrating Old Christmas—page 12



*The Perfect Gift with
Christmas Delivery Guaranteed ...
call toll-free at 1-866-768-6517*

*Send a
Gift of Love
to a Special
Granddaughter*



*Hand-set with an
exquisitely beautiful
solitaire diamond*



*Finely hand-crafted
in solid sterling
silver with rich
24K-gold-plated accents*



*Grandma's Gift
Diamond Pendant*
A FINE JEWELRY EXCLUSIVE

LIMITED-TIME OFFER



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Sales subject to product availability
and order acceptance.

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payment by 12/19/08 to guarantee
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Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____

Name (Please Print Clearly)

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01-04638-001-E67291

Dear Granddaughter,

*This is a very special gift
That you can never see
The reason it's so special is
It's just for you from me.*

*Whenever you are lonely,
or even feeling blue
You only have to hold this gift
and know I think of you.*

*You never can unwrap it
Please leave the ribbon tied.
Just hold the box close to your heart
It's filled with Love inside.*

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6517, 24 hours
a day, 7 days a
week, for
guaranteed
holiday
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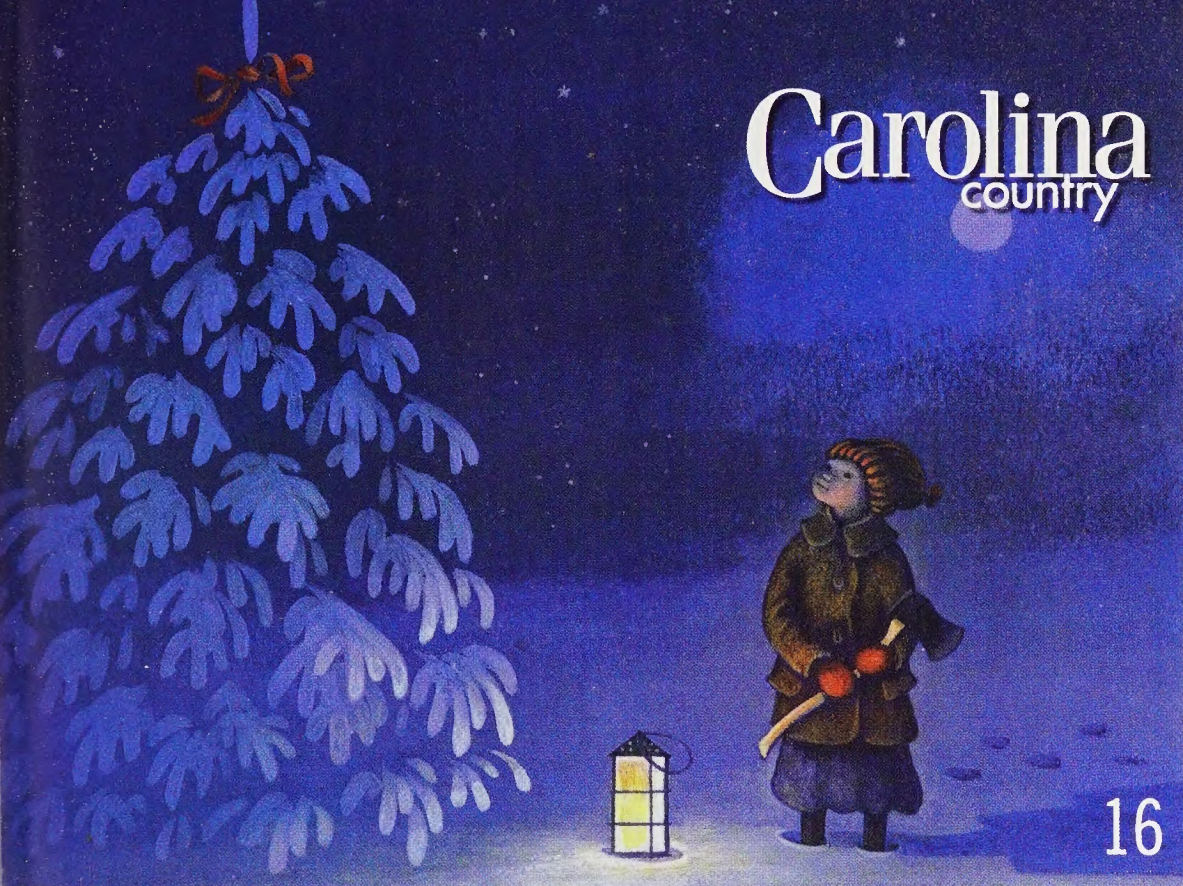
*Arrives in an
attractive
keepsake case
with the touching
"Grandma's Gift
poem."*



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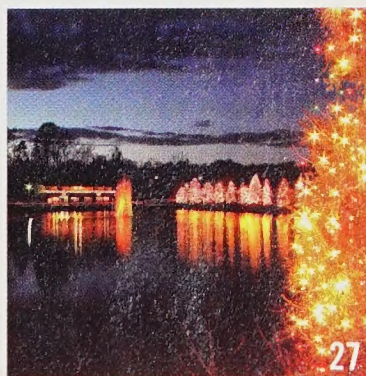
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ON THE COVER

Holiday lights in Banner Elk.
(Photo by Todd Bush,
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Carolina country

Read monthly in more than 610,000 homes

Published by North Carolina
Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

3400 Sumner Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27616
www.carolinacountry.com

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to nearly 900,000 homes and businesses. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

Why Do We Send You Carolina Country Magazine?

Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

Your co-op's board of directors authorizes a subscription to Carolina Country on behalf of the membership at a cost of less than \$4 per year.

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Carolina Country magazine is a member of the National Country Market family of publications, collectively reaching over 7 million households.

Carolina Country is available on cassette tape as a courtesy of volunteer services at the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Raleigh, N.C. (888) 388-2460.

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, N.C. 27616. Carolina Country® is a registered trademark of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (ISSN 0008-6746) (USPS 832800)

POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

Subscriptions: Individual subscriptions, \$10 per year. \$20 outside U.S.A. Schools, libraries, \$6.

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

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People helping people

By Michael E.C. Gery, Editor

Not long ago, when I was in elementary school, my mother during the weeks leading up to Christmas would drive my brother, my sisters and me around the countryside delivering presents. We took several trips for this adventure, because we lived in farm country and it took a while to get from one place to the next, and then to deliver the presents for people who lived or worked in town. Also, my mother prepared lots of these presents, including ones for the man who delivered our bread, the one who delivered our milk, the one who picked up our trash.

We visited farms and houses of neighbors, of kids who attended our school or those in my mother's Girl Scout troop, and others whose families had been especially kind to ours. We didn't even know what was in the bags that Mom had prepared for these people, except that each one was different and likely contained something the families would appreciate. We visited the homes of some families we hardly knew, and houses that we had not even entered before.

I was the older boy, so Mom assigned me to deliver presents to places that were especially remote, or those where older men lived alone or where dogs roamed watchfully. My sisters had the places where the kitchen doors opened to the aroma of freshly-made doughnuts or cookies, or where cheerful lights welcomed visitors.


At some point along the way, we learned that we delivered our own cheer to these people just to thank

them for helping us. And we learned that we visited others because they were not as fortunate as we were.

My mother still prepares these presents at this time of year. Sometimes she takes grandchildren on the trips with her. Sometimes she gives presents for certain people who come visit her.

I'm thinking about this now because Christmas this year—and the coming winter months as well—may be especially hard for some of us. I don't know of anyone who recently hasn't had to cut back on something, or who has decided to sacrifice something in order to meet the usual obligations.

As members of cooperatives, it's in our nature to help one another. If you know a family or two who might be struggling with, say, their monthly electricity costs this winter, think of something you can do to help them. Some cooperatives sponsor a program that allows members to round up their monthly electric bill payment to the next highest dollar, which establishes a fund that is administered separately as a donation pool for families who are in need of help, or for organizations that help such families. These programs have different names, such as Operation RoundUp or People Helping People or Members Care. Some cooperatives also invite charitable contributions that can help neighbors. Ask what your cooperative offers.

Giving to others what you can, when you can, always comes with your own personal reward. I learned that from my mother. And I support how North Carolina's electric cooperatives carry on the same tradition all year long. 

The Carolina Country staff wishes everyone a happy, healthy, safe and caring holiday season.

Darker shirts (from left):

Warren Kessler, Jennifer Boedart Hoey, Tara Verna.

Lighter shirts (from left):

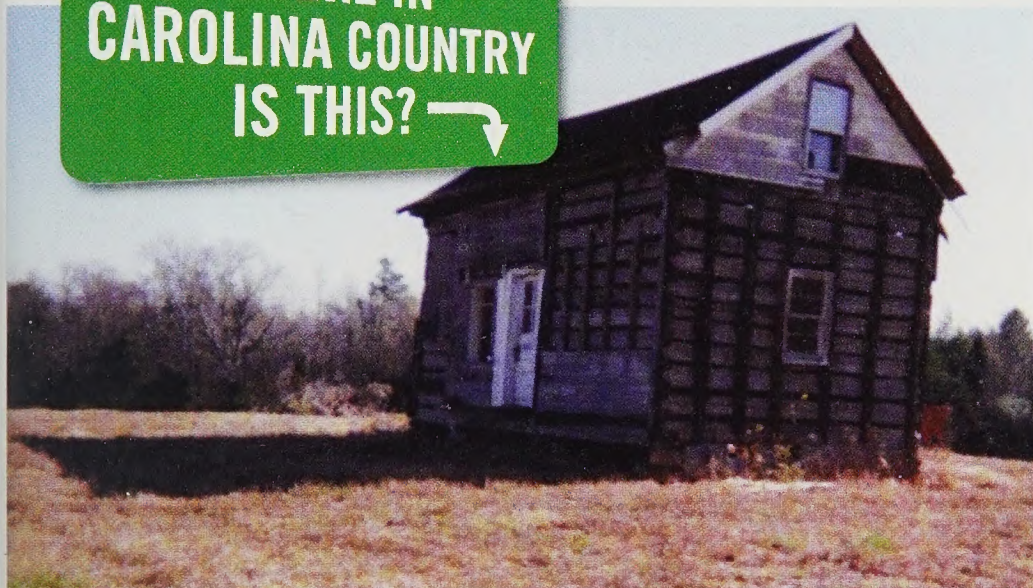
Jenny Lloyd, Renee Gannon, Karen Olson House,

Linda Van de Zande.

Driver: Michael E.C. Gery.



WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS? →



November winner:

The November picture, by James Taylor of Farmville, showed the old country school known as Forbes School, at the corner of King's Cross Rd. and Seven Pines Rd., halfway between Fountain and Farmville in Pitt County. The correct answers were numbered, and the \$25 winner chosen at random was Henry L. Smith of Farmville, a member of Pitt & Greene EMC.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Dec. 8 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our January issue, will receive \$25.

November



Make the best of every day we're given

By Faye Liles High

The best Christmas of my life was in 1989, and it actually started with Thanksgiving. After a divorce, I had sold my house in Roanoke Rapids and moved to Rocky Mount. I rented a nice house that had everything I had never had before, and I was so happy that I wanted to share it. I asked my parents, my sister and her family to join my daughter, her boyfriend and me for Thanksgiving dinner. My sister declined because she had already planned to cook at home, but my parents were coming.

I went all out to make it nice for my parents. We had a fire in the fireplace, and I used my good china and silver. The turkey and all of the trimmings were delicious. My father was so impressed that he suggested that we all come back to my house for Christmas. I was thrilled.

When December rolled around, I started decorating and put up the tree with the ornaments that I made myself. And this time, my sister and her family were coming as well as Mama and Daddy. We were going to

meet on Christmas Eve, and to our surprise we had a small snowfall the day before, which is quite rare for our area. It made everything perfect with the fire in the fireplace and all the Christmas lights. I prepared ham and turkey as well as lots of side dishes including several desserts. Everyone enjoyed the dinner tremendously.

Later that afternoon we all exchanged gifts. I gave my parents their first VCR, which they had not expected. I looked over at Daddy, and he had the biggest smile on his face that I had ever seen, which made me feel really proud and happy. I don't think I ever saw him enjoy anything as much as he did that Christmas Eve.

I thought to myself, "Well, I'll have to do this again."

By the next Christmas, I had come into some bad luck. I didn't have the funds for Christmas dinner or the gifts. I no longer lived in the nice house with the fireplace and dining room. We never know which path life will lead us to and what turns are in store for us.

In September of 1991, my Daddy went to the hospital, and they thought he might have had a stroke. A couple of days later, tests showed that he had a malignant brain tumor, the same type

of tumor that Ted Kennedy recently had removed. Daddy was transferred to Wake Medical Center in Raleigh where he underwent emergency surgery. We were told that he could live a year with treatment, but without it he would maybe survive six months. We agreed to the treatment. We wanted him to have every chance.

Daddy was transferred to Rex Hospital in Raleigh for treatment, but it didn't help. He died on Thanksgiving Day 1991, just 68 days from the day he was diagnosed with the tumor. He never even got to go home again.

Every year when the Christmas season rolls around, I think back to the best Christmas of my life. I think about how happy we all were and had no idea what lay ahead of us. We should all try and make the best of each and every day that we are given.

Faye Liles High lives in Littleton and is a member of Halifax Electric Membership Corp.

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Raleigh, NC 27616

NORTH CAROLINA'S 4-H CENTENNIAL COOKBOOK

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF BLUE RIBBON RECIPES



Foods, Nutrition, and Preservation has been a major curriculum of the North Carolina 4-H Youth Development Program since its inception in 1909. In fact, the early beginnings of 4-H offered Canning Clubs for Girls, where "young ladies" were taught the art of preparing and preserving foods grown in the family garden. The program has expanded through the years to include a variety of projects and educational programs... foods and outdoor cookery presentations, bake-offs, favorite foods shows, food preparation at a 4-H meeting, a county or state fair entry in culinary arts, preservation, baked goods, etc. **This centennial project is more than a cookbook...with every blue ribbon winning recipe accepted, the contributor will share his/her blue ribbon 4-H story.** To quote Mr. L. R. Harrill, North Carolina's First State Leader, "4-H is about the business of growing blue ribbon boys and girls."

Recipe Category: Please circle one category.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Appetizers and Snacks | Beverages | Breads | Beef, Lamb, Pork | Dairy Foods | Desserts |
| Egg Cookery | | Main Dishes | Food Preservation | On the Grill | Poultry, Fish |
| Salads & Dressings | | For a Crowd | | | |

Name of Recipe: _____

Ingredients:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Preparation Instructions:

Oven Temperature _____ Baking Time _____ Pan Size _____ Serves _____

Submitted By: _____ **Phone:** (____) _____
 (please print clearly)

County As a 4-H'er: _____ **County Today:** _____ **Email:** _____

Share Your Personal Story about How 4-H Helped You Become a Blue Ribbon Boy or Girl:

(Limit your response to 200 words. The committee will reserve the right to shorten the quote, if appropriate.)
 For example, "My 4-H Dairy Foods Presentation taught me how to make presentations in front of an audience. This cheesecake recipe earned me 1st place...more importantly, it prepared me to make presentations to major corporate leaders in my business today. Planning, practicing, anticipating the unexpected, handling questions and talking while demonstrating are all skills I use everyday."

Submit a photograph that relates to your entry. ____ Yes ____ No photo available.
 Send a self-addressed and stamped envelope if you'd like to have the photo returned.

Mail to: 4-H Centennial Cookbook Committee
NC State Box 7645, NC State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7645.
All entries must be postmarked no later than January 15, 2009.
Questions? Call 919.515.3944

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Keeping an eye on the electric distribution system

By Scott Gates

Although you can look around where you live and not see much evidence of it, your Touchstone Energy cooperative every day must maintain a very complex power distribution system. Employees must check and maintain lines, meters, substations and remote equipment, and they'll take any help they can get to lighten the workload and increase efficiency.

That's why most utilities today rely on an advanced system monitoring tool known as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition. SCADA is a set of monitoring technologies that can feed information from remote equipment back to a central location, in this case, your electric co-op's computer network.

SCADA casts a net to keep track of everything from substations to control breakers and switches, continuously monitoring equipment status and performance. This information typically gets displayed for review by a dispatcher in the office and is also

stored in a database for future analysis. If any abnormal situation arises in the system, an alarm sounds so co-op staff can respond quickly and accordingly.

The setup also allows for at least partial control over other electrically operable remote devices. For example, on a distribution system without SCADA in place, a lineworker might have to drive a long way to close a particular switch. With remote control as an option, the same action rests just a mouse-click away.

Although SCADA dates back to the 1960s, when paired with other grid monitoring devices such as advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) technology, it forms the backbone of what is now called the "smart grid." The capabilities of a smart grid are still being explored, but many experts believe utilities will be better equipped to monitor grid conditions and security, collect information, and remotely operate all manner of equipment—including even the

smallest generation sources—from a central location.

What's more, data from "smart" electric meters on homes can be sent to co-ops for tracking outages as well as analyzing and billing purposes. Alerts can be sent back through the meter to notify advanced appliances, such as "smart" clothes washers, dryers, or water heaters, when power use should be limited.

"In a smart grid, electric co-ops will be able to forecast demand and turn on distributed generation when extra power is needed," explains Mike Pehosh, principal distribution engineer at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Arlington, Va. "SCADA will be front and center in allowing this to happen."

Scott Gates writes on technology and energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Look what's happened to prices

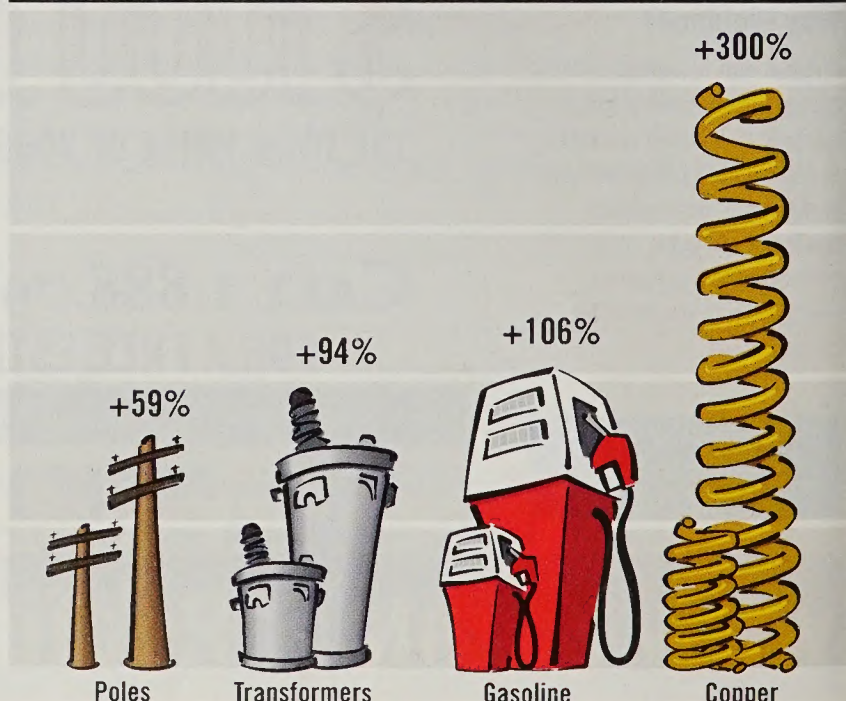
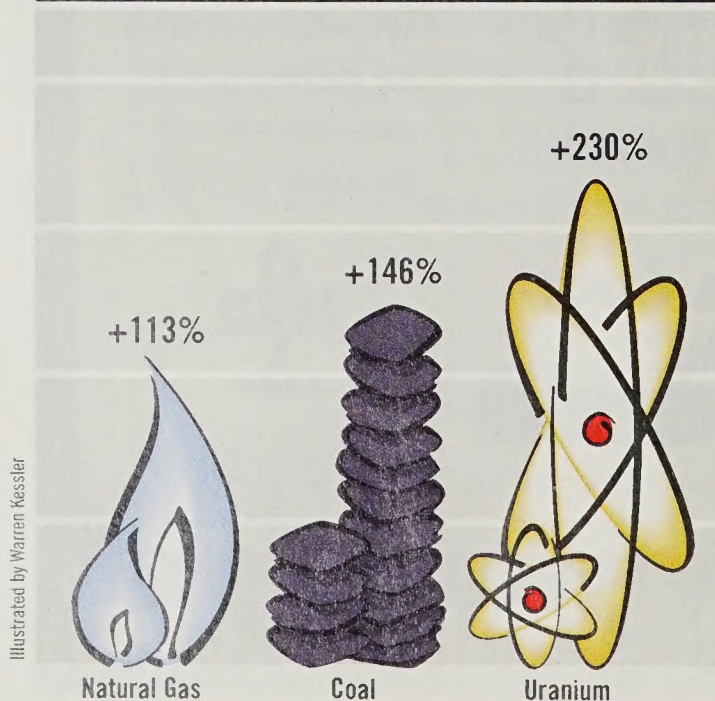
The cost of bringing you electricity reliably all day, every day, has risen dramatically during the past five years. Your cooperative is paying twice or three times as much for such necessities as gasoline, copper and steel. Also, the cost of basic fuels used to generate electricity has more than doubled in five years.

As a not-for-profit business, your cooperative must pay its expenses

and sooner or later pass them on to member-consumers. By cutting expenses where possible and introducing technological advancements, North Carolina co-ops have been able to raise rates less dramatically during the same period. Although electricity has not seen the same size increase as other commodities, the price pressure is likely to continue upward as long as the other commodity costs rise.

Price of Wholesale Fuel 2004–2008

Price of Materials 2004–2008



Illustrated by Warren Kessler

Linemen show speed and safety skills during pole top rescue competition



Jason Worley of French Broad EMC in action during his first-place winning rescue demonstration in October, completed in 1:42.33.

Jason Worley, a lineman with French Broad Electric Membership Corporation based in Marshall, is the 11th Pole Top Rescue Champion for North Carolina's electric cooperatives. After taking second at the 2006 Pole Top Rescue Competition, Worley said he was determined to take the title in 2008.

Worley beat 24 other local champions Oct. 15 at the state competition held on the lawn of North Carolina's electric cooperatives' headquarters building. He recorded a time of 1-minute, 42.33 seconds, securing the first place title by more than 2 seconds.

The pole top rescue drill consists of a line worker placing an emergency radio call, donning climbing gear, scaling 20 feet up a utility pole, rigging a rope, lowering a 105-pound mannequin and beginning CPR.

Placing second was two-time defending champion Leonard Person of Tri-County EMC, based in Dudley. Person finished the drill in 1-minute, 44.65 seconds. Shay Reed of EnergyUnited, based in Statesville, placed third with a time of 1-minute, 52.23 seconds. The fourth place winner was Russell Wells of Four County EMC, based in Burgaw. His time was 1-minute, 53.13 seconds. Rounding out the top five competitors was Charles Bryant of Roanoke Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Rich Square, with a time of 1-minute, 58.85 seconds.

More than 600 North Carolina electric cooperative line workers began the year competing for the 2008 title. Winners of local cooperative and regional competitions advanced to the state championship.

2008 Pole Top Rescue COMPETITION SCOREBOARD

(in alphabetical order by co-op)

Matthew Byrum, Albemarle EMC
2:12.15

Ben Hurley, Blue Ridge EMC
2:39.71

Chuck Nance, Brunswick EMC
2:23.37

Richard Augustson, Cape Hatteras EC
2:19.99

Jonathan Long, Carteret-Craven Electric
2:19.94

Ken Thomas, Central EMC
2:56.67

Steve Lewis, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC
2:44.23

Shay Reed, EnergyUnited
1:52.23

Russell Wells, Four County EMC
1:53.13

Jason Worley, French Broad EMC
1:42.32

Steve Height, Halifax EMC
2:03.09

Clint Riddle, Haywood EMC
3:51.27

Jarrold Norris, Jones-Onslow EMC
3:12.01

Mike Jones, Lumbee River EMC
2:13.95

Kenneth Simmons II, Pee Dee Electric
1:58.87

Brent Talley, Piedmont EMC
3:16.48

Danny Lee, Randolph EMC
2:00.33

Charles Bryant, Roanoke Electric
1:58.85

Scott Murray, Rutherford EMC
2:37.04

Bradley Bullard, South River EMC
2:36.77

Mike Mills, Surry-Yadkin EMC
2:17.82

Brad Cox, Tideland EMC
2:39.92

Leonard Person, Tri-County EMC
1:44.65

Andy Newsome, Union Power
2:11.49

Jamie Wilson, Wake Electric
2:18.47

Co-ops grant more than \$578,000 to teachers with Bright Ideas

During the month of November, North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives awarded deserving teachers across the state with Bright Ideas education grants to fund innovative classroom-based projects. This year, the cooperatives awarded more than \$578,000 in grant money.

The state's electric cooperatives established the Bright Ideas program in 1994 to help teachers who were funding classroom-based projects out of their own pockets. Today, any K-12 certified North Carolina teacher can apply for a grant of up to \$2,000.

"North Carolina's electric cooperatives are committed to bettering the communities we serve," said Morgan Lashley, Bright Ideas coordinator for North Carolina's Association of Electric Cooperatives. "We believe that contributing to the education of our state's youth is one of the best ways to show that commitment."

Since 1994, North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have awarded more than \$5.9 million to North Carolina teachers whose Bright Ideas projects have touched the lives of more than 1 million North Carolina students in all subjects including math, reading, science and technology, music and the arts. Bright Ideas is the only education grant program exclusively for North Carolina classroom teachers.

During November, cooperatives planned Bright Ideas activities such as banquets honoring winning teachers and featuring acclaimed keynote speakers, a surprise grant presentation from some of the Carolina Panthers players, and "prize patrol" visits to winning classrooms in parts of the state.





The President's Cup, honoring outstanding partnerships between the EMC and the county 4-H program was awarded to South River EMC, represented by Cathy Odell. South River EMC's tournament this year raised \$11,700 for programs in Cumberland, Harnett and Sampson counties. The President's Cup is endowed through the Dr. Mike Davis Family Fund for 4-H Innovation and Excellence. Pictured are Cathy Odell of South River EMC with Dr. Mike Davis (left) and Caleb Black, State 4-H President.

Cooperatives & 4-H team up for citizenship

Ninety golfers gathered in October at Governor's Club in Chapel Hill for the 12th Annual EMC State 4-H Clover Classic to raise funds for North Carolina's 4-H Youth Development Program. This year, 11 county 4-H programs in partnership with the state's electric cooperatives held local tournaments that culminated in the state-wide tournament, sponsored by the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC).

Proceeds from \$15,100 raised will benefit scholarships for the 4-H Citizenship North Carolina Focus for 4-H'ers across North Carolina.

"Grand Patron" was the North Carolina electric cooperatives, Touchstone Energy. "Golf Patrons" that held local tournaments with corporate sponsors were Albemarle

EMC, Central EMC, Edgecombe-Martin EMC, Halifax EMC, Piedmont EMC, Roanoke Electric and South River EMC.


Local tournaments raised over \$70,000 to help fund programs for their local counties. Counties use this money to help fund intra-state exchanges, offset project and curriculum costs, scholarships for camp, and other programs. Counties who participate include Cumberland, Edgecombe, Halifax, Harnett, Lee, Onslow, Orange, Pasquotank, Person and Sampson.

First place winners from Piedmont EMC were Monty Montsinger III, Gary Woods, Bill Outlaw and Monty Montsinger IV. Second place winners from Edgecombe-Martin EMC were Eddie Stocks, Russell Gary, Dale Riggs and Gary Hicks. Third place winners from Lee Electrical

Construction were Donnie Lee, Jason Lee and Morris McClellion.

The North Carolina 4-H Youth Development program serves 204,419 youth, ages 5-19, in North Carolina and utilizes over 19,700 adult and youth volunteers annually. Local 4-H programs are supported with resources from the Cooperative Extension Service within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and North Carolina A & T State University. 4-H has offices in all 100 counties plus the Cherokee Reservation. For more information about the 4-H Youth Development Program, contact your local Cooperative Extension office or the state 4-H office at (919) 515-3242; mailing address: NCSU Box 7606, Raleigh, NC, 27695-7606.

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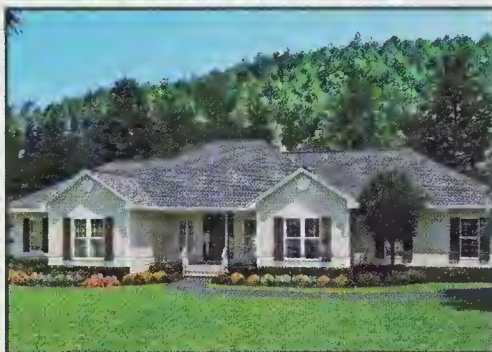


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Give Us Back Our Eleven Days!

Old Christmas in North Carolina

By Donna Campbell Smith



The Rodanthe tradition of a visit from Old Buck goes back at least to the 1940s when this photograph was taken. (Photo Aycock Brown Collection, courtesy of the Outer Banks History Center)

While some folks complain that we are bombarded with Christmas too early, others in North Carolina stretch out the holiday for 11 more days by observing Old Christmas on Jan. 6. They keep up the tree and decorations and honor a few traditions that are hundreds of years old. The reason for this may be a combination of poor communication between England and her colonies, and what some call just plain stubbornness.

In 1582, Catholic European countries replaced the inefficient and inaccurate Julian calendar with the Gregorian calendar. Protestant Europe kept the old Julian calendar for almost 200 years longer because they “would not have the pope tell them what to do.” Because of how calendars work, by the time England came around to adopting the new calendar in 1752, they were 11 days off from the rest of Europe. England dropped the 11 days, and moved Christmas back to Dec. 25 from Jan. 6. The people believed the 11 days had been stolen from them. Riots erupted where people screamed, “Give us back our eleven days!”

The news of the change did not reach the colonists living in North Carolina until well after 1752. They continued celebrating on the old Christmas day, and being a bit set in their ways, they ignored the new date even after they did receive the news.

As time went by, the Gregorian calendar became accepted, but rather than changing the date of Christmas, colonial North Carolinians saw it as an opportunity for a longer holiday. Many communities celebrated Christmas on both dates, and some just celebrated the whole two weeks. On the Outer Banks, some communities held one date as a religious day and another for a secular celebration. People visited back and forth between towns, holding religious services in one place and the more celebratory observance in another.

On the Outer Banks, Rodanthe village is said to have the biggest Old Christmas party of all. A lifetime resident of Hatteras

Island, Bette Gray, never misses the Rodanthe celebration.

“People who have moved away come, and the whole thing is just a lot of fun,” she said.

Held at the Rodanthe community center, festivities begin around 1 p.m. with an oyster shoot. For those who don’t know, an oyster shoot is like a turkey shoot, only the best sharpshooters win a half-bushel of oysters instead of a turkey.

Oysters are roasted in the afternoon and into the evening until they are all eaten, then chicken and pastry is served at 6 p.m. After supper a live band tunes up. Fairhaven United Methodist Church’s youth group donates treat bags for Santa to give out to the children.

The event’s high point is the appearance of Old Buck. This character is based on the legend of an old wild bull that terrorized the village until a hunter finally bagged him. Now, the ghost of Old Buck visits the party every year. Photographic documentation shows that Old Buck has been crashing the Rodanthe party since the 1940s.

“Old Buck comes in dancing and prancing around,” says Bette. “Sometimes someone tried to hop on his back, and it’s just a good time.”

For years John Edgar Herbert Sr. played the role of Old Buck. He died a few years ago, and now his son plays the role.

Visitors are welcome to join the Old Christmas Party at Rodanthe. There is an entrance fee and a fee for the supper. Bette says no reservations are necessary: “They just keep serving until the food is gone.”

To get a feel for other Old Christmas traditions, visit Old Stone House in Granite Quarry, N.C. The building, built in 1766, is the oldest in Rowan County. Visitors can tour the house and watch costumed guides demonstrate old-time customs, listen to period music and see how Christmas was celebrated during the colonial period. Information about the event is available by e-mailing rowanmuseum@vnet.net.

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Your Favorite Holiday Recipes

Neta's Fruitcake

Our fruitcakes are not a door-stop joke! We added one extra step to this traditional recipe. We make sure to cut the fruit in small pieces and we do not add citron that many cakes have. The name of the fruitcake is in honor of my mother-in-law, who owned the recipe until she died in 1972. We honor her by making 30 or so for our special friends who savor them each year. This makes five 2-pound cakes.

Gail C. Johnson, Minnesott Beach, Tideland EMC

- 12 eggs
- 1 pound sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ pound butter
- 4 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder (not needed with self-rising flour)
- 2 pounds candied cherries, chopped
- 2 pounds candied pineapple, chopped
- 2 pounds white raisins (use 1 pound regular if desired)
- 2 pounds pecans (may substitute 1 pound English walnuts)

Cream butter and sugar, then add eggs 1 or 2 at a time. While creaming sugar, add 3 cups flour alternately (add the baking powder to the third cup). Save the 4th cup of flour to mix with the chopped fruit and nuts, a small amount at a time to coat and mix fruit and nuts. Add fruit and nuts to the batter. Bake at 250 degrees for 4 hours. Clean a long broom straw, double over (not broken), then stick it in cake; if straw comes out sticky, cook a little longer. For the 2-pound cakes, bake 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Fourth Generation Applesauce Cake

Applesauce cakes were traditional with my kin because no one liked fruitcake! I can testify that this applesauce cake recipe has been used in my family for at least four generations in Duplin and Greene counties (and in Alaskan bush villages where I taught for 23 years). As a child just after Thanksgiving, I watched my mother help my grandmother make half a dozen tube cakes. These were "basted" weekly with my grandad's homemade grape wine until served or given as gifts at Christmas. My children's families prefer the wine added only when served.

Linda Dobson Edwards, Morganton, Rutherford EMC

- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups sugar
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups applesauce
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 4 level teaspoons baking soda with plain flour (or 2 teaspoons with self-rising flour)
- 2 eggs
- 4 cups flour and 1 teaspoon cream of tartar (reserve 1 cup flour to mix in raisins and nuts)
- 1 package raisins
- 2 cups chopped nuts

Cream butter and sugar. Add baking soda and spices to applesauce. Alternately add applesauce mixture, eggs and flour to the butter and sugar. Lastly, fold in floured raisins and nuts.

Bake at 350 degrees approximately 1 hour or until a knife comes out clean.

Ham and Cheese Rolls

These are some of my family's favorite holiday recipes. It wouldn't be Christmas in our home without those special dishes that have become a family tradition. Everyone looks forward to Christmas dinner almost as much as opening presents!

Carolyn H. Mintz, Willard, Four County EMC

- 1 cup cooked ham, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Swiss cheese, finely chopped
- 2 green onions, chopped
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons prepared mustard
- 1 can (8 ounces) refrigerated crescent rolls
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 egg, beaten

Combine ham, cheese, onion and mustard; mix well. Separate rolls into 8 triangles. Place 2 heaping tablespoons of ham mixture in center of each triangle. Bring tips of triangle together in center of ham mixture, press edges together to seal. Place on greased baking sheet. Combine water and egg, brush over rolls and bake at 375 degrees for 12 minutes or until golden brown.

Spinach Balls

These are a healthier alternative to traditional sausage balls and very tasty!

Daphne Petrey, Fleetwood, Blue Ridge Electric

- 2 boxes chopped spinach, cooked, drained and squeezed
- 3 cups herb seasoned stuffing mix
- 3 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 6 eggs, well beaten
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, melted
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons garlic salt
- 1-2 cups medium (or sharp) cheddar cheese, grated. (Use 1 cup if you are trying to cut out calories, use 2 cups to amplify taste.)

Combine and form into balls. Bake on slightly greased cookie sheet at 325 degrees for 15-20 minutes (until golden brown). These can be made ahead.

Thanks to everyone who sent in your favorite holiday recipes. We wish that we could print them all. You can see more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish stories of "The Dumbest Investment I Ever Made." {Deadline was Nov 15}.



Southern Turkey and Stuffing Bake

Brenda Fowler, Glen Alpine, Rutherford EMC

- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 4 slices bacon, cut into small pieces
- 4 cups seasoned cornbread stuffing mix
- 1½ cups water
- 2 cups frozen cut broccoli
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- ½ teaspoon seasoned salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper (cayenne)
- 2 (¾ pound) turkey breast tenderloins

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 2-quart glass baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. In Dutch oven, cook onions and bacon over medium-high heat 4 to 5 minutes or until bacon is browned and onions are tender, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and add cornbread mix and water. Mix well. Stir in broccoli and spread in sprayed baking dish. In small bowl, combine thyme, salt, garlic powder and ground red pepper; mixing well. Rub mix onto turkey tenderloins. Arrange over stuffing mixture and press into stuffing mixture slightly. Cover with foil. Bake covered at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Uncover baking dish, bake an additional 10 to 15 minutes or until turkey is no longer pink in center. To serve, cut turkey into crosswise slices.

Holiday Orange Soup

This recipe goes back in my mother's family 100 years. The soup has an orange color. Amazing comfort food to go with the turkey and vegetables, and so easy!

Kimberly Childress, Lexington, EnergyUnited

- 2 cans (14-ounce) beef broth
- 1 gallon water
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 to 3 pounds beef short ribs
- 1 can (15-ounce) tomato sauce
- 2 teaspoons dry parsley
- 8 to 12 oz. Kluski pasta or egg noodles

Combine water with beef broth in a large pot. Add onion and beef short ribs, salt and pepper generously. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for two hours. Remove meat with slotted spoon, de-bone, chop up and place back in pot along with tomato sauce and dry parsley. Stir and continue to simmer a few minutes, then add Kluski or egg noodles. Simmer until noodles are tender. Serve.

Mom's Favorite Coconut Cake

When my brother Jake got married, left home and had a son, we began a new Christmas tradition of getting together on Christmas Eve for our family Christmas



meal. My mother was a great cook and gardener, and she prepared a delicious feast. When I got married and left home, another tradition began. Mom asked that I make her favorite coconut cake, from scratch of course. I thought I would make one for my husband's family, too. It has been many years since we lost our parents, but we still get together on Christmas Eve for a bountiful meal, and of course, coconut cake.

Jane B. King, Gastonia, Rutherford EMC

Cake

- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 eggs
- ¾ teaspoon soda (stir in buttermilk)
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2½ cups sifted flour

Bake in 3 (8-inch) greased and floured pans at 350 degrees for 20–25 minutes. Cool in pans about 7 minutes before cooling on cake rack.

Filling

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup coconut milk

Cook until thick and spread between layers.

Seven-Minute Frosting


- 1 large egg white
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 large marshmallows (or 6–7 miniature)
- 2 tablespoons white corn syrup
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅓ cup boiling water

Cook in top of double boiler, beating constantly with electric mixer for 7–10 minutes. Frost cake and coat with grated coconut (1 fresh coconut, grated or about 1½ cups frozen coconut).

Special Christmas Chocolate Treat

On Christmas Day my cousins, brothers and I are in for a treat. We put a plastic



tablecloth on the kitchen table and set up a chocolate fountain. Use toothpicks to dip strawberries, bananas, marshmallows, Graham crackers and pretzel sticks. 

Lydia Cook, Youngsville, Wake Electric

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1. Approximately 200 words or less.
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3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos should be a minimum of 1200 by 800 pixels.
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THE HOME OF THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS TREE

*means much more to
Mitchell County*

By Karen Olson House

Talk about the gift that keeps on giving. It all started when author Gloria Houston served as grand marshal of the 2003 Christmas parade in Spruce Pine. It should have been a merry time, but the crowd included kids without coats and parents with pinched faces. Residents had been hit hard by the loss of thousands of textile and furniture jobs in Mitchell County (pop. 15,000). Families with two or more newly unemployed wage earners especially suffered. Folks were worried and discouraged, with more than a few wondering if they would have to sell the family sleigh.

Gloria Houston, born and raised close by, wanted to help. She knew that author Marjorie Rawlings had boosted her Florida hometown's economy by making it the setting in her classic

novel, "The Yearling." So Houston rather jokingly suggested that officials make little Spruce Pine "The Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree," since it's the setting for her own award-winning children's book, "The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree."

The seed was planted and Houston donated her book's marketing rights to the Mitchell County Development Foundation. Seeking to create income for displaced workers, officials focused on building "place-based" businesses and they began with their own natural resources. The renowned Penland School of Crafts is just up the road, and the picturesque area has long drawn talented glassblowers, weavers, woodworkers, potters and other artists eager to make their mark. So in November 2005, armed with a bold idea, a semi-crazy name and 15 newly licensed product makers, including former factory workers, the Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree Store opened downtown.


Since then, the store has steadfastly blossomed, buoyed by hope and hard work. In 2006, First Lady Laura Bush elevated the project's status by ordering 250 glistening ornaments made by project artisans for two White House trees. Today, both online and in the store, more than 300 handcrafted items are on sale, inspired by the book's winsome illustrations and poignant text. It has sparked small businesses across Mitchell, Yancy, McDowell, Avery and Buncombe counties. Eighty craftspeople now participate, most of whom work out of their homes and studios. Staff uses two-thirds of the store's 3,000-square-foot space for merchandising and the other third for demonstrations, book signings and workshops. The project's focus includes educating artisans on running a business, finding raw materials, filing paperwork and hiring help, explains Patti Jensen, the project's public relations and marketing director.

First year store sales were \$60,000. In 2007, they totaled \$184,000. Artists keep

70 percent of their products' sales. Of the amount kept by the store, a portion goes to annual scholarships to encourage students to stay in school. Most recently, five Mitchell High graduates received scholarships of \$500 each.

Project entrepreneurs include Cy Thomas, age 11, who sells organic, edible play dough called "Modo." The Bakersville boy selected corn, a biodegradable material, for his container and designed Modo's logo. He and his mom stir aromatic blueberry, banana and cherry batches on the stove, and his dad weighs them. "It's a good thing to have around for children to play with," Cy says. The fifth-grader plans to plow profits back into buying ingredients. He's also considering branching out into birdbaths.

Shops and restaurants enjoy more customers. And villagers take pleasure in showing off the store to out-of-town guests. Of course, not all jobs have been replaced. And the economy still faces tough challenges. But the project chased the chill away.

Perhaps its most important benefit can't be measured: the sense of renewed pride. "These jobs will never be outsourced," says Jensen. "It's something that belongs to them, by them, for them." 



Home Of The Perfect Christmas Tree Store

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Winter Home Maintenance Tips

As winter approaches, it's a good idea to prepare your house for the cold-weather months. Taking a few minutes now to walk around your home—visually inspecting important systems from a safety perspective and making note of routine maintenance chores that need attention—is a great way to get started, and a good winter maintenance checklist can help. Here are some tips to help get you started:



Clean gutters and downspouts. A clogged gutter or downspout can freeze and wreak havoc on your home. Make a point of checking your gutters and downspouts well before daytime temperatures dip below 32 degrees F.



Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Use the testing feature on each device to make sure it's working. Replace batteries and inoperable units as needed.



Check furnace vents. If your home has a forced air furnace, check to make sure that vents in primary living areas are open and unobstructed. You can partially close vents located in less frequently used rooms, but don't close them all the way unless you're sure there is no chance of water pipes freezing as a result. Keep in mind that temperatures inside the walls of your home will be lower than adjacent living areas.



Stock up on furnace filters. Dirty furnace filters waste energy. They also force your furnace to work harder to heat your home. Your owner's manual should explain what types of filters are best for your furnace, and how often they need to be changed. Keep in mind that a high-efficiency air filter will trap more dirt than a conventional filter and may need to be replaced more frequently to keep your furnace from overheating.



Replace worn out weather strips. Worn out weather stripping around windows and doors can dramatically increase your home heating costs. Weather strips are easy to replace, and should pay for themselves in a very short time.

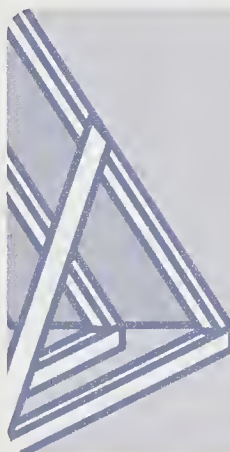


Schedule checkups for all home heating systems.

Regular maintenance can help furnaces, wood stoves, chimneys and other home heating components stay in top working order. Most experts recommend that you schedule an annual inspection by a qualified professional for each system, but service intervals may vary from one system or manufacturer to another, so play it safe and check your owners manual or contact each heating system manufacturer for guidance.



Recharge or replace fire extinguishers. Check the gauge on every fire extinguisher to make sure it's fully charged (arrow pointing to the green area of the gauge). Remove each extinguisher from its mounting bracket and turn it upside down to help prevent the dry chemicals inside from caking on the bottom over time. If your fire extinguishers are more than one year old, consider having them inspected by a professional.



Inspect the insulation in attics and crawl spaces.

Over time, fiberglass insulation panels can sag away from rafters, joists and wall cavities, allowing cold air to penetrate your home. Duct tape can be used to reseal a small problem area, but extensive sagging may indicate a moisture problem. Try to determine the source of this problem before you replace large areas of insulation. And, if you decide to replace the insulation yourself, make sure you follow manufacturer guidelines for personal protective equipment.



Protect exterior water valves. Hose bibs located in an unheated garage or on the outside of your home may need protection to prevent freezing damage. Inexpensive insulating covers are available at most home centers, but it's still a good idea to shut off the water supply connected to the hose bib from inside the home. After shutting off the water supply, open each hose bib to allow any remaining water to drain. Disconnect hoses and store them inside for the winter.

Invite healthy eating to the holidays

Five tips to help you stay in shape this holiday season

By Rachel Bowers

The holiday season has arrived. The grocery store shelves are lined with shiny cans of cranberry sauce, and the temptation to indulge our nation's overactive appetite becomes a little harder to resist.

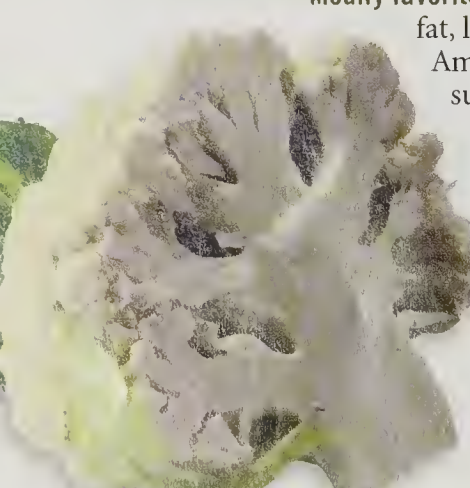
According to the Duke Diet and Fitness Center, the average American gains five pounds between Thanksgiving and the first of the year. It may seem impossible to get through the holidays without loosening your belt a few notches, but for the sake of your health, it is essential that you try to keep the pounds down.

Startling statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveal that 30 percent of American adults older than 20 are obese—more than 60 million people. Half of all Americans fail to get the exercise they need to improve health, says the CDC. Being overweight and obese contribute to serious health problems like heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some forms of cancer.

For those who struggle with weight problems, the holidays may not be the best time to try and lose weight. A more realistic goal might be to maintain your current weight throughout the holiday season and meet 2009 with the confidence you need to improve your health.

Here are some tips on how to maintain good health, as well as your jolly holiday spirit:

- **Don't let holiday bustle take you to the drive-through.** Avoid fast food and eat at home on days when you'll be busy shopping and running errands. Prepare healthy meals ahead of time and keep them in the fridge or freezer for easy reheating when things get hectic.
- **Keep portions small.** You don't have to avoid your favorite holiday dishes, just be careful not to overeat. Be sure to include healthier items like fresh fruits and vegetables alongside the candied sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie.
- **Modify favorite recipes.** Experiment with low-fat, low-calorie ingredients. The American Heart Association offers suggestions for recipes at www.americanheart.org
- **Drink more water than wine.** Eight glasses of water a day will help you avoid seasonal colds and flu and stay healthy.
- **Get the party moving.** Plan holiday events that will encourage friends and family to stay active: sing carols, go ice skating or take a brisk walk.



Be sure to include healthier items like fresh fruits alongside the candied sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie.

When planning your holiday menu, mix things up and get creative with unexpected twists on traditional favorites, such as this recipe for atypical mashed potatoes.

Surprise Mashed "Potatoes"

(a good one for diabetics)

Cauliflower may well be an underappreciated vegetable, as you will see when you taste these luscious mashed "potatoes." Select a medium-sized head of cauliflower for this recipe.

- 4 cups cauliflower florets
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 2 tablespoons fat-free Half-and-Half
- Pinch salt
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper

Steam or microwave cauliflower until soft. Puree in a food processor, adding oil spray and Half-and-Half to taste. Season with salt and pepper, and serve.

PER SERVING: 90 calories, 2 grams protein, 7 grams total fat (.5 gram saturated fat), 5 grams carbohydrates, 0 gram cholesterol, 60 grams sodium, 3 gram fiber

Eat, drink and be merry in moderation, and you can get through the holidays without picking up extra pounds along the way. 🍷

Rachel Bowers is a freelance writer on health and retirement issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Are LED light bulbs ready for prime time?

As an “alternative to the alternative,” the LED (light-emitting diode) light bulb may well dethrone the compact fluorescent (CFL) as king of the green lighting choices. But it has a way to go yet in terms of both affordability and brightness.

LEDs have been used for decades in other applications—forming the numbers on digital clocks, lighting up watches and cell phones and, when used in clusters, illuminating traffic lights. Until recently LED lighting has been impractical to use for everyday applications because it is built around costly semiconductor technology. But the price of semiconductor materials has dropped in recent years.

LED bulbs are lit solely by the movement of electrons. Unlike incandescents, they have no filament that will burn out; and unlike CFLs, they contain no mercury or other toxic substances. Proponents say LEDs can last some 60 times longer than incandescents and 10 times longer than CFLs. And unlike incandescents, LEDs don’t get especially hot and use a much higher percentage of electricity for directly generating light.

But LED bulbs are not known for their brightness. According to a January 2008 article in *Science Daily*, “Because of their structure and material, much of the light in standard LEDs becomes trapped, reducing the brightness of the light and making them unsuitable as the main lighting source in the home.” LED makers get around this problem in some applications by clustering many small LED bulbs together in a single casing to concentrate the light emitted. But such LED “bulbs” still don’t generate light much brighter than a 35-watt incandescent, much too little light for reading or other focused tasks.

EarthLED is lighting the way out with its EvoLux and ZetaLux bulbs, which use multiple LEDs in a single casing to generate light. The EvoLux delivers light equal to that of a 100-watt incandescent, the company says. But it has an \$80/bulb price tag. The ZetaLux, which retails for \$49.99, delivers light equivalent to a 50- or 60-watt incandescent, will last 50,000 hours and costs only \$2 yearly to run.

Other bulb makers are working on similar designs for high-powered LED bulbs, hoping that an increase in availability will help spur demand, which will in turn lower prices across the board. Until then, consumers can find LED bulbs suitable for secondary and mood lighting purposes in many hardware and big box stores. C. Crane’s 1.3-watt LED bulb, for example, generates as much light as a 15-watt incandescent bulb. Check your local hardware store, as well as online vendors such as Best Home LED Lighting, Bulbster, SuperBrightLEDs.com and We Love LEDs.

To learn more: How Stuff Works, www.howstuffworks.com/led.htm; EarthLED, www.earthled.com; Best Home LED Lighting, www.besthomeledlighting.com; Bulbster, www.bulbster.com; SuperBrightLEDs.com, www.superbrightleds.com; We Love LEDs, www.weloveleds.com.

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Kendrack, courtesy Flickr

Motor oil leaked from individual vehicles—or outright dumped by homeowners and commercial garages—constitutes a significant chunk of storm water runoff.

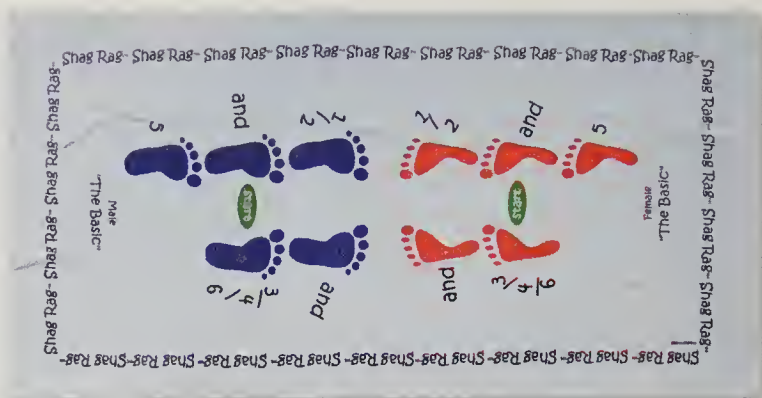
Used motor oil

Motor oil leaked from individual vehicles—or outright dumped by homeowners and commercial garages—constitutes a significant chunk of storm water runoff, the fallen precipitation that runs off of roads and parking lots and inevitably finds its way into local water bodies.

These pollutants include not only leaked motor oil—which may contain toxic substances like lead, benzene, zinc or magnesium—but also fertilizers, insecticides, plastic debris, cigarette butts, paints, solvents, sediments and other waste. Topsoil and natural vegetation would ordinarily filter many of these pollutants out, but the impermeable pavement that covers much of the surface where these pollutants originate carries it right into storm drains and into streams, rivers, lakes and the ocean. This pollution also finds its way into underground aquifers that supply our drinking water.

Upwards of 40 percent of oil pollution in the U.S. comes from the improper disposal of used motor oil by individuals. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends keeping on top of automotive maintenance to prevent and repair leaks, and disposing of used motor oil and other automotive fluids and batteries at designated drop-offs or recycling locations (consult Earth911.org to find one near you). Also, it is preferable to wash your car at a commercial car wash instead of in your driveway. By law, car washes must treat their wastewater before disposing of it. 

To learn more: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov; Earth911, www.earth911.org.



Shag Rag

This unique beach towel pays colorful tribute to the dance so popular in the Carolinas. The Shag Rag displays foot steps, numbers and the "Shag Rag" name around the perimeter on one side of the towel, while the reverse side is blank. The white towel's dimensions are 30 by 60 inches, the red, blue, green and black printed area is 21.75 by 48 inches, and it's made of 86 percent cotton and 14 percent polyester for a plush feel. Each towel comes poly-bagged, with a set of directions on how to do the dance. T-Val, owned by members of Wake EMC, also sells oval Shag stickers and golf towels (or put another way, "sweat rags" for gentlemen shaggers who use it while dancing). The beach towel sells for \$19.95 and the golf towel sells for \$5.50.

(919) 395-1808

www.theshagrag.com

Central N.C. land conservancy

The LandTrust for Central North Carolina is a non-profit corporation that works to identify, protect and preserve Piedmont properties. The organization, funded by donations, covers 10 counties: Anson, Cabarrus, Davidson, Davie, Iredell, Montgomery, Randolph, Richmond, Rowan and Stanly. It uses many tools, including tax-saving conservation easements and voluntary protection easements, to accomplish its goal of saving land. Merchandise available online includes a tote bag for \$5, a ballcap for \$10, and a kid's tee shirt for \$8, with the words "Save a little land for me" lettered on the back.

(704) 647-0302

www.landtrustcnc.org

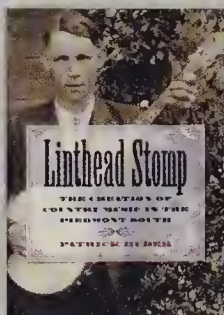
on the bookshelf

"Linthead Stomp"

Contrary to common belief, the roots of American country music do not spring solely from southern farms or mountain hollows. Much of this music recorded before World War II actually emerged from the bustling cities and towns of the Piedmont South, and no group contributed more to early country music commercialization than southern factory workers. In "Linthead Stomp: The Creation of Country Music in the Piedmont South," author Patrick Huber explores country music origins in the Piedmont's mill villages. Huber offers vivid portraits of a colorful cast of Piedmont millhand musicians, including Fiddlin' John Carson, Charlie Poole, Dave McCarn, and the Dixon Brothers. Drawing on several sources, including rare 78-rpm recordings and unpublished interviews, Huber considers the impact that urban living, industrial work and mass culture had on their music. "Linthead Stomp" celebrates the Piedmont millhand fiddlers, guitarists and banjo pickers who created distinctive music that spoke to the changing realities of the South. Hardcover, 440 pages, \$30. Published by University of North Carolina Press.

(800) 848-6224

www.uncpress.unc.edu

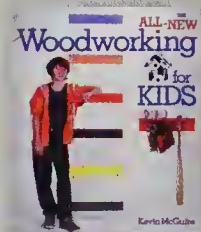


"The All-New Woodworking for Kids"

One of the rare woodworking volumes created for kids, this guide carries more projects and more information in an expanded introductory section on tools, materials, techniques and safety. Of the nearly 40 projects included, 15 are new and 25 have been redesigned. Author Kevin McGuire, who lives in Asheville, gives instructions on projects directed at ages 8 to 12 years old. They include making a workshop bench, creating a DVD storage cube that spins, building a doggie diner, creating a box with a secret drawer and many other long-lasting items. Softcover, 144 pages, \$14.95. Published by Lark Books in Asheville, a division of Sterling Publishing.

(800) 367-9692

www.larkbooks.com

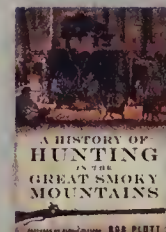


History of mountain hunting

From the primitive weaponry of the brave Cherokee to audacious rifle-toting ridge runners, these stories are a tribute to the adventure of hunting game. Many residents hunted out of necessity, others for the thrill of the chase, and some were the hunted. Author and avid outdoorsman Bob Plott, who lives near Statesville, takes readers back into time and into the minds of the region's most intrepid hunters. Places explored include Swain County tributaries Hazel Creek, the site of record-setting bear hunts, and Deep Creek, both of which were a sportsman's paradise. "A History of Hunting in the Great Smoky Mountains" includes more than 40 black and white photographs. Softcover, 128 pages, \$19.99.

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Dena Cherry, Lincolnton



From Rachel Widener Bentley, Lenoir

- ... Grandmother's house IS over the river and through the woods.
- ... The local convenience store parking lot is crowded on a weekday morning with hunters in camouflage, orange toboggans and ATV's, loading coolers with ice.
- ... You can buy a hunting rifle, hardware, bait, order a custom pizza with extra cheese, eat a hand-dipped vanilla ice cream cone and lay 20 minutes in the tanning bed at the local general store 11 miles away from the nearest strip mall.
- ... The general store owner will follow you to the parking lot with his camera to take a photo of your 8-point trophy buck or that 10-pound catfish to be posted on the Wall of Fame inside the store.
- ... September Sundays are pre-reserved for church homecomings at lunch and the singing of visitors and guests later in the afternoon.
- ... It's that time of year when the produce stand along the highway flips their one sign over to show "Apples & Pumpkins." The other side says "Cantaloupe & Watermelon."
- ... You always serve coleslaw with catfish or perch, homemade cornbread with pinto beans, and sweet iced tea with every meal.
- ... Your waitress knows what livermush is and recommends it served with scrambled eggs and bacon.

From Rhonda Enloe, Rutherfordton

- ... You remember seeing Sunday dinner running around the chopping block without its head.
- ... You wore bread bags on your feet in the snow.
- ... You worried about falling down the hole in the outhouse.
- ... For a nickel, you filled up a bag with BB Bats, Kits, and Mary Janes at the service station.
- ... When your mama cooked squirrel, you and your siblings fought over who got the brains.
- ... You took a brown paper bag of biscuits to the garden to eat with warm tomatoes right off of the vine.
- ... You went to your neighbors place to watch television because you didn't have one.
- ... You laughed when you figured that if your uncle ever put a bathroom in his house he would probably order it from Sears and Roebuck, and that is exactly what he did.

From Dena Cherry, Lincolnton

- ... You had to say goodbye to your pet pig because your family would be having him for a meal soon.
- ... Your Mamaw gave you scissors when you were 6 years old and let you cut and roll her hair.
- ... You had to sleep with so many layers of quilts and blankets on the bed that you couldn't move.

From Betty Jean Hollowell Gazurek, formerly of Chowan County

- ... You knew your labor was needed in the fields when your dad brought home new straw hats.
- ... Chickens could go under your house in search of insects, and you never had termites.
- ... You didn't want to do your chores, so you said you'll do them "prezney."
- ... You rode on top of cornstalks on a horse-drawn cart.
- ... Mama drew your foot outline on a sheet of paper to take to the general store to buy your shoes.
- ... Eight of you shared two old worn-out bikes.
- ... You liked your broomstick skirts and pinafores.

From Jeanne Harris, Belmont

- ... Your mama would bring home an 8-by-10 box of Krispy Kremes, and you learned to enjoy this early treat with a speckled blue pot perking with fresh Gill's Hotel special or Eight-O-Clock coffee. Then Mama would nap or doze until you were off to school, and you walked with friends, past the mill, the lumber yard, the sock mill, and the downtown general store, drugs and sundries, Iris Theatre, Cohen's and Belk's.
- ... Your shower was a garden hose strung over a clothes line with a sheet or blanket for privacy.

From Irma C. Laird, Raeford

- ... You were told to "play purty" when you argued with other children.

From Martha Estep, Denver

- ... You know boiled peanuts are best from a crock pot that appears unclean.
- ... You have to ship Cheerwine to a soldier in Iraq.
- ... The neighbor's pig meets you at your back door when you return from a trip to the store.
- ... You have to take Bojangles chicken to your family Up North.
- ... You were baptized in Lake Norman.
- ... You know what camp meetin' is, and you know it's called a tent not a shack.
- ... You know it is impossible to eat just one grit.
- ... Your tighty whities are stained orange from swimming in the red clay-tinged lake.
- ... You don't care what's in livermush or liver pudding, you just know you like it. ☺

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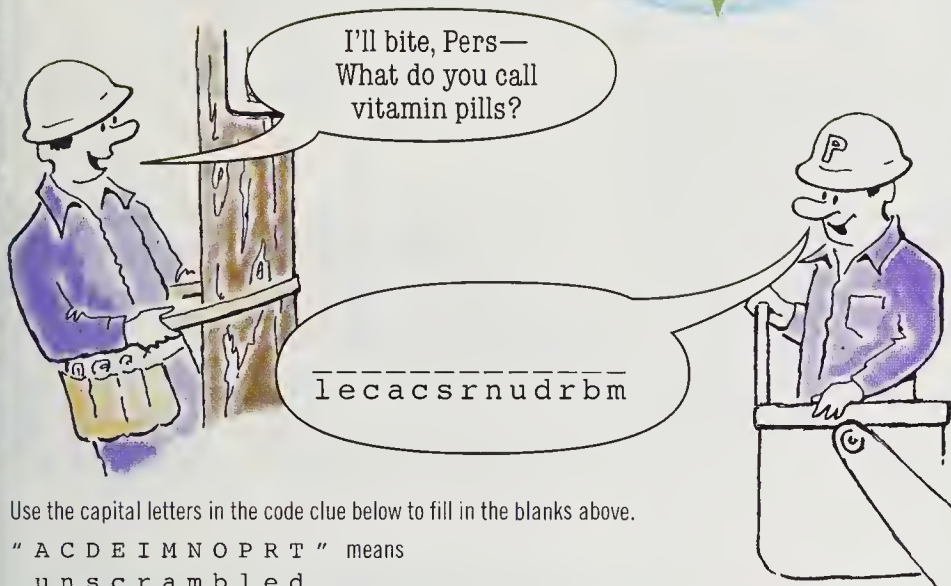
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—cgj

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What the antique dealer told his assistant about the 17th century chair.

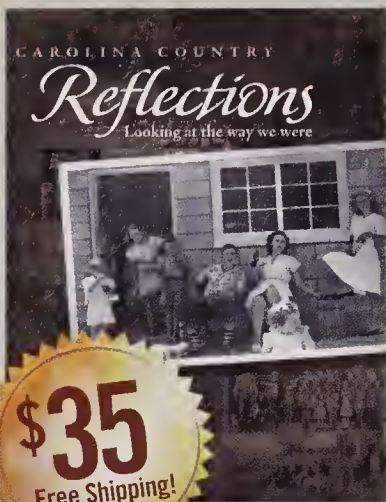
"Don't fix it if

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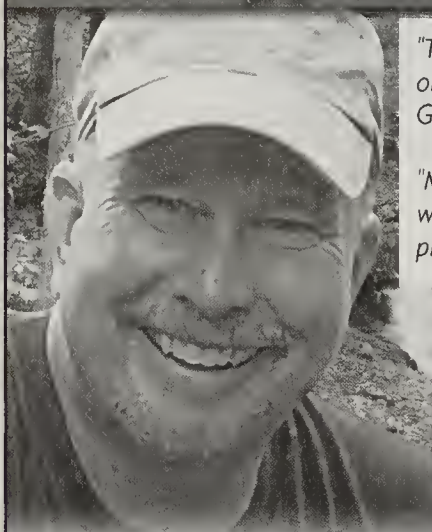


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JOYNER'S CORNER ANSWERS:

Getting To Know... Herman W. Lay



Born: Born in Charlotte in 1909

Known for: Founder of Lay's Potato Chips

Accomplishments: Lay began selling Pepsi-Colas in his front yard at age 11. He excelled academically and athletically in his Greenville, S.C., high school, winning a full athletic scholarship to Furman University. He attended two years, then left to pursue a sales career. Despite the Great Depression, he was determined to succeed and early on displayed what he called "stick-to-itiveness." His decision to work as a route salesman for Barrett Food Products Company, which made potato chips, was fateful. After gaining sales territories, Lay took over Barrett's small Nashville warehouse as a distributor, using his Model A car to deliver chips. He wasn't paid a salary, just an advance against commissions. In 1938 he secured a loan, purchased the company's Memphis and Atlanta plants and the H.W. Lay Company was born. By 1956, his company was the largest manufacturer of potato chips and snack foods in the U.S. Lay's company later merged with Frito, to become Frito-Lay. A Horatio Alger Award recipient, Lay donated around \$3.5 million to Furman. He and his wife, Mimi, had four children. He retired at the age of 71, and died in 1982.

Quote: "Learn how the engine runs and drive it yourself."

Christmas Town, USA

Every holiday season, the town of McAdenville goes aglow with more than 450,000 sparkling red, green and white Christmas lights. The mill town, west of Charlotte, began its beloved tradition in 1956 when McAdenville Men's Club members creatively hung lights on nine outdoor trees. Today, town volunteers festoon more than 400 live evergreens, with lights ranging from 500 up to 5,000 per tree. Visitors especially like the pageantry at the village's lake, which includes an image of Old Man Winter blowing snowflakes across the water nearby. Lights start at 5:30 p.m. daily from December 1 through December 26. Admission is free. (704) 824-3190 or www.mcadenville-christmastown.com

Field Trip

Dinosaurs spotted in North Carolina

SciWorks, a 65,000 square-foot facility in Winston-Salem, has interactive exhibits in natural/biological science, astronomy, natural history and health sciences. Now through Jan. 31, add roaring, stomping, animated dinosaurs to the mix. Based on paleontological discovery, "Scenes of the Dinosaurs" includes an Apatosaurus mother and her baby, two Pachycephalosaurs butting heads in a show of herd dominance, and a Maiasaura mother tending to her nest filled with hatching eggs. Ongoing attractions include the recently revamped PhysicsWorks Gallery, an environmental park featuring sheep, white-tailed deer and an otter habitat, and a planetarium that seats 120.

Admission: Adults \$10; seniors (ages 62 and up) \$8; students (ages 6–19) and children (ages 2–5) \$6. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. (336) 767-6730 or www.sciworks.org



(MORE) EGG CARTONS REBORN

In October's Tar Heel Lessons, we wrote about ways to recycle egg containers, including making them watercolor paint palettes and jewelry organizers. Readers recently shared more ideas: Tideland Electric member S. Neil of New Bern uses the cartons as stackable golf ball containers. Lumbee EMC member Dawn Clark of Pembroke and reader Pamela Lowe use them to store breakable holiday ornaments.

Wrap it, reuse it! Wrap your holiday gifts in colorful Sunday comics, old maps, or your own printed artwork, and cut out gift tags from pretty holiday cards.



SHARE YOUR RECYCLING TIPS!

How do YOU reuse common household items? Send your creative tips to karen.house@carolinacountry.com Put "Home Recycling" in the subject field of your email, and include your name and town. We'll print some of the ideas with credits here in a later issue.



classroom
chuckle

Teacher: Why did the cat join the Red Cross?
Student: Because she wanted to be a first-aid kit.

December Events



During the Toe River Studio Tour, more than 100 artisans open their studio doors to the public on December 6–7, from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. in Spruce Pine. From pottery and baskets, to furniture, watercolors and more, follow the crafts trail map to a wide selection of unique art from Western North Carolina. To learn more, call (828) 765-0520 or visit www.toeriverarts.org.

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Twelve Days of Christmas

Holiday events
Nov. 30 through Jan. 4, Chapel Hill
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"Star Over Bethlehem"

Emmerich Theatre
Through Dec. 20, Edenton
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www.visitedenton.com

A Dickens of a Christmas

Downtown events through Dec. 24,
New Bern
(252) 637-3111
www.newbernchamber.com

Dead Sea Scrolls

NC Museum of Natural Sciences
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www.visitraleigh.com

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Artifacts from the Albemarle Region
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www.chetola.com

Christmas at Korner's Folly

Through Jan. 4, Kernersville
(336) 966-7922
www.kornersfolly.org

"Seeing the City: Sloan's New York"

Through January 4, Winston-Salem
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www.reynoldahouse.org

"Mountain Roots"

Through mid-Jan., Bryson City
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www.spiritofappalachia.org

1

Amaryllis Sale

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www.historichendersonville.org

Christmas Shop

Dec. 1–31, Hertford
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www.perquimansarts.org

2

Holiday Workshop

Using natural materials to decorate
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www.mesda.org

4

Candle Tea

Moravian Christmas customs
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www.candletea.org

Country Music Showcase Christmas in Dixie

Dec. 4–7, Smithfield
(919) 209-2099

Festival of Trees

Dec. 4–7, Brevard
(828) 885-7286

River Town Christmas

Dec. 4–7, Columbia
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www.visittyrrellcounty.com

Festival of Trees

Dec. 4–10, Smithfield
(919) 989-5380

American Music Jubilee Christmas Show

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5

"The Tailor of Gloucester"

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www.pamlicomusic.org

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(828) 884-9908

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City Youth Ballet
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Salem Christmas Candlelight Tour

Dec. 5–6, 12–13, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-7300
www.oldsalem.org

Waterfowl Weekend

Dec. 5–7, Harkers Island
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www.coresound.com

Country Tonight

Music and comedy
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Lights on the Neuse

Dec. 5–7, 12–14, 18–21, 23–24,
27, Clayton
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www.lightsontheneuse.com

6

Christmas Open House

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Kenly
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Christmas Tour of Homes

Bessemer City
(704) 629-2163

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State Historic Site
Four Oaks
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www.lattaplantation.org

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www.bobtimberlake.com

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(252) 586-6430

Ravine Adventure Guided Hike

Chimney Rock Park
(828) 245-1492
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Holiday Homemade Bazaar
Roanoke Rapids
(252) 519-2603
www.halifaxarts.com

Christmas Craft Show
Dec. 6–7, Hillsborough
(919) 245-3330
www.theshopsatdanielboone.com

A Colonial Christmas
Dec. 6–7, Raleigh
(919) 833-3431

Core Sound Decoy Festival
Dec. 6–7, Harkers Island
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www.decoyguild.com

"The Nutcracker"
Dec. 6–7, 11–14, Winston-Salem
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www.chimneyrockpark.com

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(828) 765-0520
www.toeriverarts.org

Carriage Rides
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www.forestcityevents.com

7
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www.pearlharborday.org

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www.poplargrove.com

Candlelight Tour
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www.candlelighttour.com

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8
"Christmas on the Farm"
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www.historicjohnsonfarm.org

Christmas Music
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Spindale
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9
Christmas Show & Craft Sale
Carthage
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10
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11
Christmas Tea
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Candlelight Christmas Tour
Dec. 11–12, Murfreesboro
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www.murfreesboronc.org

12
Johnston County Chorale Christmas
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www.sciworks.org

Candlelight Christmas Tour
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www.downtownnewbern.com

Christmas Candlelight Tour
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www.edentonhistoricalcommission.org

Southern Horse Festival
Dec. 12–14, Williamston
(800) 529-9206
www.nchorsecouncil.com

13
"A Christmas Memory"
Truman Capote's memoir
Winston-Salem
(336) 758-4531
www.reynoldahouse.org

Holly & Ivy Home Tour
New Bern
(252) 514-4935

Open House
House in the Horseshoe
Sanford
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Christmas at Connemara
Home of Carl Sandburg
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14
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www.ncarts.edu/performances

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Winter Solstice Hike
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(828) 692-0385

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Lovefeast
Winston-Salem
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www.homemoravian.org

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www.historichendersonville.org

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Living trees that please

This month, many people try to decide whether to pick an artificial Christmas tree, a cut tree or a living tree. If you choose the latter, keep these tips in mind.

To improve its chances of survival in the landscape, select a species of tree that is adapted to your area. The N.C. Cooperative Extension offers this advice:

- ▶ Fraser fir is recommended only for elevations above 4,500 feet.
- ▶ Best white pine growth in North Carolina takes place in areas of 1,200 to 3,000 feet in elevation on cooler, north-facing slopes, in coves, and along stream bottoms. White pine has a limited life expectancy if planted in the lower Piedmont and coastal plain, especially in clay soils.
- ▶ Leyland cypress, Virginia pine and eastern red cedar are all suitable for the Piedmont and coastal plain. They are adapted to a wide variety of sites and tolerate warmer climates. However, they require more pruning than the "mountain" species to retain their Christmas tree appearance.

For information about other species, visit www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/xmas/ctn_028.html.

When choosing a planting site, learn your tree's mature height to be sure it will have plenty of room to grow. Use Christmas trees in hedges or as specimen plants away from the house.

Living trees are usually sold balled and burlapped. Do not let the root ball dry out, whether indoors or outdoors. To ensure adequate moisture retention, place the tree in a tub. Keep the roots evenly moist but not saturated. Display the tree away from heating ducts or heaters, ideally in a room with a temperature of 70° F or cooler. It's a good idea to use a commercially formulated anti-desiccant or anti-transpirant to protect needles and reduce stress. Try to keep the tree indoors for no more than one week.

Before planting the tree, give it a few days to acclimate to being outdoors again. You might want to prepare the planting hole in advance to make planting as quick a chore as possible. If you bought a potted tree, loosen or pry apart roots before placing it in the planting hole.

Hort Shorts

- ▶ River birch is especially handsome in winter, when its peeling bark shows to best advantage. Depending on variety, the bark may be white, brown, cinnamon or orange in color. Though it occurs naturally in moist environments, river birch is also adaptable to drier soils.
- ▶ The dark-green, leathery leaves and milky-white berries of mistletoe make it a quintessential holiday decoration. Mistletoe depends on water and nutrients in live trees to survive, but it is considered semi-parasitic because it is also capable of making its own food through photosynthesis. Healthy trees in the landscape are usually able to share their resources with mistletoe with little ill effect.



More than 1,600 North Carolina growers produce an estimated 50 million Fraser fir Christmas trees. Fraser firs represent approximately 90 percent of the species grown in the state. To learn more, including where to purchase these trees, visit <http://ncchristmastrees.com>.

- ▶ The yellow flowers of Chinese witch hazel (*Hamamelis mollis*) arrive in winter, providing color, interesting fringe-like petals and intoxicating perfume. They perform best in full sun to part shade in well-drained, evenly moist, slightly acidic soil that is rich in organic matter. Chinese witch hazel is less hardy than hybrids but is still suitable for most of North Carolina. Temperatures colder than -10° F will damage flower buds.
- ▶ Winter is a perfect time to plant dormant shrubs and trees. In winter and early spring, the plant's energy is focused on healthy root development rather than top growth.
- ▶ Remove spent flowers from pansies to encourage new bloom. Remove and discard any yellowed or diseased leaves.
- ▶ A glut of garden catalogs this time of year is a joy to many spring- and summer-starved gardeners. But be sure to keep your salivary glands in check as you ogle the goods. Compare prices among catalogs. If a plant is a lot cheaper in one, check the size (usually given in pot size or age of plant). You may discover that different nurseries are offering different size plants. You might also review the customer ratings at Garden Watchdog: <http://davesgarden.com/products/gwd>. ⓘ



Carla Burgess can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com.

For more gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com.

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Range hoods should be seen, not heard

Installing a new range hood is usually part of a kitchen remodeling job. Today, people are installing larger ranges, often professional-size models, so the old range hood, even if it still works well, also needs to be replaced. Switching to a newer style of range hood, such as an island model, will require installing new vent ducting.

Opening a window during mild weather, when you aren't using heating or air-conditioning, can be effective ventilation for certain types of cooking. When just boiling water, steaming vegetables and baking breads, the natural ventilation from a window can carry away the excess moisture and heat and provide pleasant fresh air. Don't open a window that creates a direct breeze over the range because this can draw heat away from the cooking pot.

For other times of the year or when you are cooking greasy foods or foods with strong odors, running the range hood is more efficient and effective. Just opening a window requires much more airflow than a range hood. This increases the load on your furnace or air conditioner. Also, hot greasy droplets tend to settle out of the air before they ever reach the open window.

There have been recent advancements in the design of range hoods that improve energy efficiency. In general, the most efficient range hoods are also the quietest. This is because efficient blower designs move the indoor air smoothly through the range hood, which also reduces the noise level, particularly on high speed.

With the newer decorative range hoods, hidden designs such as pullout updraft or pop-up downdraft models are not as popular as they were a decade ago. Also, downdraft models are not as efficient because they try to reverse the natural upward flow of the warm air over a range. Stainless steel models are attractive and easy to clean inside, but they show fingerprints. Plain steel, coated to look similar to stainless steel, does not fingerprint as easily.

There are two types of range hood blower designs. Some models use a fan blade to draw out the air from above the range. This is an inexpensive design and is not particularly efficient or quiet. Better models use an efficient squirrel-cage blower design, similar to a furnace blower.


Energy Star (www.energystar.gov) has a list of range hoods that meet energy efficiency requirements. The efficiency of range hoods can be compared by dividing the cfm (cubic feet per minute) of airflow by the amount of electricity (watts) each uses. All Energy Star models produce a minimum of 2.8 cfm of airflow per watt consumed. This includes the electricity used for the lighting built into the range hood.



This Energy Star-rated range hood is shallow to allow adequate height over the range when it is mounted under cabinets.

To reduce energy consumption, the type of lighting used is as important as the blower design. Range hoods with CFLs (compact fluorescent lights) are the most efficient, and the light quality is reasonably good. You can select full-spectrum CFLs with more natural-looking light quality. Many range hoods still use halogen lighting. This is not as energy efficient, but halogen bulbs produce a very white light that makes food look better and is easy to work under.

It is important to properly locate and size a range hood for maximum effectiveness using the least amount of electricity. As a rule of thumb, a maximum airflow capacity of 50 to 75 cfm per foot width of the range should be adequate. Locating the range hood about 24 inches above the range is ideal, but cabinets sometimes limit height. If possible, the range hood should extend three inches over each side of the range.

If you select an efficient, quiet range hood, two or three speeds are adequate. Models with totally variable speeds are available for people who are particularly sensitive to the noise level and indoor air quality. A high-heat safety sensor to automatically switch it up to high speed is a good feature. 

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The following companies offer efficient range hoods:

Abbaka (800) 548-3932
www.abbaka.com

Broan-Nutone (800) 558-1711
www.broan.com

Dacor (800) 772-7778
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Recipes from "Tri-County's Best"

These recipes are from "Tri-County's Best," a new cookbook published by Tri-County Electric Membership Corp. The book contains 700 recipes in a hardcover, 3-ring binder, with tabs for eight categories of recipes, plus an index and cooking tips. The recipes came from the cooperative's past newsletters, plus archived and recent contributions from members and employees.

Proceeds from the sale of "Tri-County's Best" benefit the Employee-Funded Scholarship Program, which since 2000 has assisted 256 high school seniors with scholarships totaling \$119,000. Tri-County EMC serves more than 22,000 member-accounts in Wayne, Duplin, Lenoir and parts of Johnston, Jones, Sampson and Wilson counties.

The cookbooks cost \$12 plus \$3 shipping (total \$15) from Tri-County EMC, P.O. Box 130, Dudley, NC 28333. Phone: (919) 735-2611.



Christmas Rice

Wilma Herring, Warsaw

- 1 cup rice, uncooked
- 2 cans chicken and rice soup
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 can buttered mushrooms
- 1 small jar pimento
- 1 large green pepper, chopped
- 1 stick butter

Mix all ingredients together. Pour into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes. Stir about 3 times while baking.

Sweet Potato Balls

Glenn Fields, La Grange

- 6 large sweet potatoes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark brown sugar
- Regular size marshmallows
- Sweet coconut

Bake, peel and mash sweet potatoes. Melt butter and mix with brown sugar. Mix this into mashed potatoes. Shape into tennis ball size balls. Make a hole with thumb and insert marshmallow. Seal the hole and roll ball in sweet coconut. Bake 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve hot.

Butter Pecan Cake

Rose Rouse, La Grange

- 1 box Betty Crocker Butter Pecan Cake Mix
- 1 cup water
- 4 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- 1 can coconut pecan frosting
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped pecans

Blend cake mix, water, eggs and oil together. Add frosting and pecans. Mix well. Pour into greased Bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Taste of Home Recipe

Tangy Meatballs

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats
- 1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 pounds lean ground beef

Sauce

- 2 cups ketchup
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion
- 1-2 teaspoons liquid smoke, optional
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder

In a large bowl, beat eggs. Add oats, milk, onion, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Add the ground beef; mix well. Shape into $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch balls. Place in two 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking pans. Bake, uncovered, at 375 degrees for 30 minutes.

Drain; place all of the meatballs in one of the pans. In a saucepan, bring the sauce ingredients to a boil. Pour over meatballs. Bake, uncovered, 20 minutes longer or until meat is not longer pink.

Yield: 4 dozen

Winning reader recipe

Red Velvet Bars

- 1 box Red Velvet cake mix
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
- 1 cup white baking chips
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Stir together dry cake mix, eggs, oil and water. Stir in nuts and chips. Spread in a 9-by-14-inch pan which has been sprayed with nonstick spray. Bake at 350 degrees for about 22 minutes or until it tests done, but not dry. Cut into bars. Tasty and so pretty.

Yield: About 2 dozen

Judy Jones of Four County EMC

will receive \$25 for submitting this recipe.

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive \$25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com



Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine, unless otherwise indicated.

For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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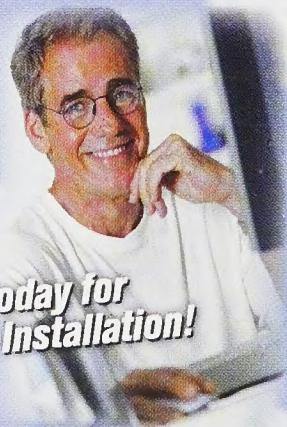
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|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 5 | \$.55 | \$.55 |
| 15 | \$.59 | \$.55 |
| 35 | \$ 1.30 | \$ 1.08 |
| 55 | \$ 3.20 | \$ 2.53 |
| 65 | \$ 5.36 | \$ 4.14 |
| 75 | \$ 10.23 | \$ 7.64 |
| 85 | \$ 19.77 | \$ 16.52 |

* Does not include \$36 policy fee, minimums may apply

Sample Monthly Rates per 1,000*

| <u>Issue</u> <u>Age</u> | <u>Male</u> (tobacco) | <u>Female</u> (tobacco) |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5 | N/A | N/A |
| 15 | N/A | N/A |
| 35 | \$ 1.79 | \$ 1.49 |
| 55 | \$ 4.30 | \$ 3.55 |
| 65 | \$ 7.18 | \$ 5.41 |
| 75 | \$ 13.24 | \$ 8.85 |
| 85 | \$ 26.26 | \$ 17.67 |

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